

AN ELF APPROACH TO PRONUNCIATION TEACHING AND THE RESPECT FOR LINGUISTIC IDENTITY VIA THE VALORIZATION OF ACCENT¹

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RESUMO

A nova dimensão do papel que a língua inglesa tem desempenhado nas comunicações internacionais coloca a questão de se o ensino-aprendizagem de pronúncia deveria perpetuar os modelos estabelecidos de sotaque nativo, seja americano, britânico ou outro. Ainda, se o sotaque nativo deve ser substituído, outra pergunta surge, então, relativa à(s) variante(s) que o substituiria(m). A resposta é proposta por Jenkins (2000) em seu livro, *The Phonology of English as an International Language*, ou por Walker (2010), a pronúncia do Inglês como *Lingua Franca* (ILF). Assim, este artigo objetiva promover a discussão desse novo conceito de pronúncia do inglês e suas implicações para o ensino-aprendizagem de pronúncia, propondo uma análise e uma reavaliação de alguns conceitos chave para ILF: o perfil sociolinguístico do inglês, os contextos de ensino-aprendizagem do Inglês para Falantes de Outras Línguas (IFOL), as mudanças de foco no ensino de pronúncia do inglês através dos últimos cem anos aproximadamente, e os elementos fundamentais para o ensino da pronúncia do ILF: o Núcleo da Língua Franca (NLF). Após essa análise, apresentamos os resultados de uma entrevista realizada com trinta e seis acadêmicos de Letras Português-Inglês da Universidade Feevale, que responderam a perguntas relacionadas a aspectos como os sotaques a que eles se expõem e os elementos que consideram importantes em uma aula de pronúncia. Finalmente, são apresentadas considerações a respeito das possibilidades de trabalho com o ILF e o NLF no Brasil.

Palavras-chave: ILF. NLF. Reavaliação do ensino de pronúncia.

ABSTRACT

The new dimension of the role the English language has been playing for international communication poses the question of whether pronunciation teaching and learning should still perpetuate the established models of a native accent, be it American, British, or any other. Thus, should the native accent be replaced, a new question arises, then, regarding what variety/varieties that/those would be. The answer is proposed by Jenkins (2000) in her book, *The Phonology of English as an International Language*, or by Walker (2010), the pronunciation of English as a *Lingua Franca* (ELF). Therefore, this paper aims to promote the discussion

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of this new conception of English pronunciation and its implications for the pronunciation teaching and learning process by proposing an analysis and a reassessment of some key concepts for ELF: the sociolinguistic profile of English, the contexts of teaching and learning English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), the changes of focus of English pronunciation teaching throughout the last one hundred years or so, and the fundamental elements for the teaching of ELF pronunciation — the Lingua Franca Core (LFC). After such an analysis, we present the results of a survey conducted with thirty-six undergraduate students of Modern Languages – English and Portuguese at Universidade Feevale, who answered to questions related to the aspects such as the accents they have been exposed to and the elements they consider important in a pronunciation lesson. Finally, considerations regarding the possibilities of working with ELF and the LFC in Brazil are presented.

Keywords: ELF. LFC. Pronunciation teaching reassessment.

INTRODUCTION

English has become a global language used internationally among people from many countries and of many different mother languages (L1)⁴ (Crystal, 2003a; Jenkins, 2000 and 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2007; McKay, 2002; Walker, 2010). In this broad communicative use, English starts being regarded as a *Lingua Franca* (ELF)⁵, a Latin term that defines a language used by speakers who do not share the same L1. Since language is basically a means for the establishment of communication, all of its elements deserve attention in order to promote a successful conveyance and reception of the intended message. Pronunciation, therefore, as Celce-Murcia *et alli* (2010) assert, deserves as much attention in class

as any other aspect of the language, and usually is centered around the models established by native speakers, mainly American or British.

However, the new role English has been playing for international communication challenges these established models of a 'native accent'. Consequently, new proposals for the treatment of English pronunciation have arisen, amongst which the approach proposed by Jenkins (2000) in the title of her book, *The Phonology of English as an International Language*, and by Walker (2010), the pronunciation of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). Such proposals are centered upon what is considered both teachable and learnable (Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994), thus making the goals of pronunciation teaching more achievable by setting more realistic goals (Avery and Ehrlich, 1992), which are represented by the Lingua Franca Core (LFC) (Jenkins, 2000; Walker, 2010), which comprises elements considered essential for international communication. These elements are most of the segmental and some of the suprasegmental features, with the addition of an element that had been mistreated or censured so far: the speaker's L1 accent. However, in order to understand the role that (m)other-language accents play in ELF, the sociolinguistic profile of English around the world and the contexts in which the language is taught need to be analyzed, as follows.

ESOL: SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROFILE AND TEACHING-LEARNING CONTEXTS REVISITED AND REASSESSED

The process of teaching and learning of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), cannot be considered in isolation from the contexts in which it happens, and this process receives labels that Harmer (2007) defines as overwhelming, since there is an abundance of initials and acronyms to describe them, such as English as a Second Language (ESL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), amongst others. Although there is a tendency of viewing ESL and EFL as the same thing because what matters is the acquisition of the language, Brown (2007) draws the attention that an operational distinction between them is necessary due to what happens outside the classroom. In an ESL context, there is "an instant 'laboratory' available 24 hours a day" (Celce-Murcia *et alli*, 2010, p. 134), that

⁴ In this article, a mother language will be referred to as L1, while 'second language' (L2) will be applied to the conception of both second and foreign language; the term 'second language acquisition' (SLA), in its turn, will refer to both language acquisition and learning as well. However, (m)other language(s) is used as an emphasis on accent addition (see sections 1.3 and 2.2).

⁵ The term used in this article is ELF, in accordance with Jenkins (2007), who states that thus English can be seen as a language used between non-native speakers of English, without excluding its native speakers, however.

is, the surrounding target language, whereas for the EFL context the implementation of a communicative approach represents a greater challenge both for the teacher and for the learners (*ibid.*, p. 135), as this 'laboratory' is not available⁶.

Many teachers seem to have ignored what these acronyms implicate both to their teaching practice and to their learners' possibilities. Therefore, three of these acronyms, namely, ESL, EFL, and ELF — regarded here as the main ones —, will be analyzed and revisited below. However, before such implications be (re)assessed, it is important to consider the sociolinguistic profile of English.

KACHRU'S SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROFILE OF ENGLISH

The three-concentric-circle model of the sociolinguistic profile of English proposed by Kachru in 1985 (*apud* Harmer, 2007; Jenkins, 2000; Kirkpatrick, 2007; McKay, 2002; Walker, 2010) defines what English as a mother, second or foreign language is throughout the world. In the so-called Inner Circle of Kachru's model, English is considered a Native Language (ENL) — however difficult it may be to define a mother tongue (Kirkpatrick, 2007) or a native speaker (McKay, 2002; Kirkpatrick, 2007) —, for being a "primary language" (Harmer, 2007, p. 17) first learned and spoken by "over 45 percent of the population in 10 countries" (Richards, 1985, p. 1). This circle comprises the United Kingdom and the United States, amongst others, where "English spread largely because of a migration of English speakers" (McKay, 2002, p. 10) to settlements that later developed their own national varieties. Spoken by some 400 million people (Crystal, 2003a), this native English presents dialectal varieties, of which those related to pronunciation⁷ are the ones most generally recognizable, leading to the acknowledgment of one of them as the prestigious

variety⁸ — usually Received Pronunciation (RP) or BBC English in the UK⁹ and General American (GA) in the US¹⁰ —, at the expense of the others, frequently considered incorrect or non-standard (see Walker, 2010).

The Outer Circle of Kachru's model comprises previous colonies of the British Empire, like India and Nigeria, where English has become either an official or a widely-used L2 (Walker, 2010). These are contexts in which there are institutionalized 'non-native' varieties of English, regarded as creoles and pidgins (McKay, 2002). The Outer Circle has an estimate amount of 430 million speakers (Crystal, 2003a) who are at least bilingual, and whose varieties are "felt to belong as much to the local populations as to the original colonizing force" (Walker, 2010, p. 3).

The Expanding Circle, in its turn, is comprised by countries where English is neither a first language, nor a second one; it does not have any official status either, but is starting to emerge as a Global Language. Usually, this Circle defines EFL

⁸ A way to understand how a variety is regarded as prestigious or not is by the analysis proposed by Ryan, Giles and Sebastian (1982) in their *Types of language preference patterns*, which considers both status and solidarity distributed in four distinct patterns. Pattern A is called 'majority group preference', i.e., "speakers of both varieties acknowledge the superiority of the dominant group's language variety (LV1) with regard to social power as well as for group solidarity" (*op. cit.*, p. 9). Pattern or type B defines a 'majority status, ingroup solidarity': status is attributed to the LV1, but there is preference for the LV2 regarding language use. Pattern C presents both loyalty and status being attributed to each variety by its own group of speakers, which "reflects the sense (whether realistic or not) of equal status" (*id.*, p. 10), being named thus 'ingroup preference'. Pattern D, in its turn, called 'majority group status, minority group solidarity', is related to the awareness of the possible choice of the varieties regarding *status quo* — which ultimately represents respect for them.

⁹ Regarding how the Received Pronunciation became the standardized variety in England, and consequently in the UK, the reader is referred to the first chapter of Mugglestone (1997).

¹⁰ This is considered to be the accent of American native speakers of English who do not have a noticeable southern or eastern accent (Wells, 2000). Regarding the major dialect areas of American English, the reader is referred to Gass and Lefkowitz (1998).

⁶ Further discussions regarding the availability of opportunities for interaction is held in section 1.3.

⁷ Variation, when related to grammar and vocabulary, is called 'dialect', and when related to pronunciation, 'accent' (see Kirkpatrick, 2007; and Walker, 2010).

contexts in countries like Israel and China, where English is even being adopted as a language of education (Kirkpatrick, 2007). The amount of non-native speakers in this context outnumbers the one of native speakers in a ratio of almost 3:1, since there is “a total of approximately 750 million speakers of English in the Expanding Circle” (Crystal, 2003a, p. 68). Of course, there is also the problem of linguistic prejudice shaping the views of both the varieties and their speakers by favoring one over the others (Kirkpatrick, 2007) in this context.

THE WELL (?) KNOWN TEACHING-LEARNING CONTEXTS OF ESL AND EFL

Once Kachru’s Circles are understood, the teaching-learning contexts of ESOL in the world can be reassessed. In order to do so, ESL and EFL contexts need to be examined more properly by evidencing not only their characteristics, but also what relates to them in terms of pedagogic approaches and considerations, as follow.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

There are two distinct sub-contexts regarding ESL (Howatt and Widdowson, 2004). First, the “label was a colonial coinage which appeared in the 1920s” (op. cit., p. xvi) and was/is used whenever English functions as the official “language of law, government, education, business, and the media” (Richards, 1985, p. 2) in the countries that once belonged to the British Empire as colonies, like Botswana and Fiji. Usually, in this context, the learner needs “the ability to engage in all communicative functions in which the students themselves will need to function” (Judd, 1987, p. 7), which should be made by the development of all four skills and with a focus on formal registers due to the official situations in which the language would be used. Also, as fluency for this context should be more functional than conversational, the teaching approach should emphasize what is necessary for learners to perform their work tasks by carefully choosing job-related topics, and pronunciation should also be developed to resemble a native one, or rather, what Kirkpatrick (2007) defines as “nativised,” due to the characteristic of the interlocutors.

Second, ESL occurs in English speaking countries like the USA and England, whenever a

non-native speaker is “living in the target-language community” (Harmer, 2007, p. 19) and using English to communicate at work or learning it at school. It is also defined as English for immigrants (Howatt and Widdowson, 2004), since “over 50 percent of the world’s non-English-speaking foreign students study in English-speaking countries” (Richards, 1985, p. 2-3). In such a context, it is assumed that learners will need “to express basically all of their ideas and feelings, with the possible exceptions of intimate conversations with close friends and family” (Judd, 1987, p. 5), hence the need to help learners develop all four skills in a variety of registers and by using a wide range of topics, which should be promoted via the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach by a native-speaker teacher (Judd, 1987). Also, the learner is expected to develop an as much as possible native-like pronunciation of the target community lest he or she feels excluded (Walker, 2010; Jenkins, 2007).

English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

EFL contexts are those in which “English is not actually used or spoken very much in the normal course of daily life. In these countries, English is typically learned at school, but students have little opportunity to use English outside the classroom” (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 27), like in Brazil¹¹. There is not a special status for English as an academic language or any other significant role, English still “may be the language of certain courses at a university, or at least of a large percentage of the students’ textbooks” (Richards, 1985, p. 2), which entails certain specific implications. Firstly, the English language is *just* another academic subject studied through the medium of L1 (Richard-Amato, 2010), that is why there is a greater challenge for a more communicative language teaching in this context, since the language “serves little communicative functions for students once they finish the actual course” (Judd, 1987, p. 6)¹². Secondly, it is possible

¹¹ In spite of Schlatter and Garcez’s (2009) consideration of English as an Additional Language for Brazil, the emphasis here is in the fact that there is not an official status for the language except that it is the most widely — and ineffectively (see de Lima, 2011) — taught foreign language in schools.

¹² This happens in regular schools in Brazil. There are,

that English be the medium of instruction, which happens both in bilingual programs and in language immersion programs (Richard-Amato, 2010), typical of some private schools that offer a bilingual curriculum, or of language schools¹³. Thirdly, there is the assumption that learners will not need much English for the interaction with native-speakers (Judd, 1987), and that constraints of time (one hour per week) prevent teachers from providing better opportunities for their students to interact more (Richard-Amato, 2010). What is more, there is a suggestion that there should be more emphasis on instruction on form via application of “controlled materials such as a classical audiolingual or even a grammar-translation approach” (Judd, 1987, p. 8) and pronunciation instruction would be necessary only if the learner should face an interactional situation with native-speakers in sporadic contacts, in which case the focus should be on the native model preferred by the learners or the teacher (Celce-Murcia *et alli*, 2010).

There may also be a situation in which learners study EFL “on short courses in Britain, the USA, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, etc.” (Harmer, 2007, p. 19). However, there are enough reasons for students not to be motivated to learn English “since students may have difficulty in seeing the relevance of learning English [because t]heir immediate use of the language may seem far removed from their own circumstances” (Brown, 2007, p. 135), unless they need it for specific purposes. Henceforth, EFL can be seen as a phrase that places more emphasis on the language rather than on the learners (Howatt and Widdowson, 2004), because English is the language used by most of the scientists, businessmen, and tourists to ensure an ample readership for new discoveries and ideas (Richards, 1985), in a register

of course, situations in which teachers strive to develop a CLT approach in their classes in spite of all impediments faced in the profession. However, as Barreto and Alves (2009) state, the practice in many classrooms is still too far from the premises of CLT, probably because the policy of L2 teaching in Brazil still conceives oral and aural skills as irrelevant or destined to a few, which is mainly a result of social prejudice against the poor (see Oliveira e Paiva, 2011; and Graddol, 2006).

¹³ here are, however, language schools in which the L1 is the medium of instruction, at least in the first levels of instruction.

that is quite formal, with a more limited repertoire of lexicon and topics (Judd, 1987), mainly comprising what is called English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Oral skills, then, are needed only in case of possible interactions with native speakers — something restricted to an elite (Judd, 1987) —, a situation in which native-like pronunciation should be aimed as the best model, however conflictive such assumption may be regarding linguistic identity (Walker, 2010).

ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA (ELF)

ELF is also called English as a Global Language, or English as an International Language (EIL), since it has achieved this status for having “a special role that is recognized in every country” (Crystal, 2003a, p. 3)¹⁴. There is a series of implications for this context, which represents a shift in many paradigms. First, this context represents not only a change in perspective, but also a reassessment of values: the foreign language (EFL) becomes the *lingua franca* (ELF) — a language “used by people of different language backgrounds to communicate with each other” (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 7). This is due to the fact that English “is being used by far greater numbers of non-native speakers than native speakers” (Walker, 2010, p. 6), especially for international communication among non-native speakers in situations related to business, tourism, and science, to name a few.

Second, ELF yields a renewed context for ESOL because it is not possible to say that this context “simply involves reversing the second and third letters [of EFL] to arrive at ELF” (Jenkins 2000, p. 11); rather, ELF involves bestowing its speakers with the right to use the language as their own — the actualization of the change of emphasis from the language to the learner (Howatt and Widdowson, 2004). This means that there is a re-nationalization of English (McKay, 2002) — “ELF represents a community of users of English” (Walker, 2010, p. 7). ELF, then, is not connected to any specific country or group, especially those of the Inner Circle, which could promote a sense of alienness (Jenkins, 2000).

¹⁴ Regarding the process through which English has achieved this international status, the reader is referred to Crystal (2003a), or to a summary of its first edition in McKay (2002). Another source of information regarding such process is found in Kirkpatrick (2007).

Third, this ELF linguistic communality is both local and global at the same time (McKay, 2002), promoting a reassessment of L1 influence: the foreign accentedness is embraced as natural variation established by the influence of (m)other languages (Walker, 2010), provided that such features do not frustrate communication¹⁵. What is more, it is in this context that ELF varieties can be seen as having their own right, that is, each variety is “described in its *own terms* rather than by comparison with ENL” (Jenkins, 2007, p. 2, emphasis in original)¹⁶.

Also, for the teaching community, as a result of this respect and valorization of ELF varieties, there is a new perspective, which entails both responsibility and open-mindedness. Regarding responsibility, teachers are like any other people: they tend to “maintain stereotyped and often negative views of certain language varieties and their speakers” (Edwards, 1982, p. 30), which can hinder their students’ early success in communication if such views are not altered. Concerning open-mindedness, since neither the vocabulary range in this context nor the teaching methodology for ELF needs to be as restricted as those devised for EFL by Judd (1987), there can be the application of a renewed Communicative Approach (McKay, 2002) in which the teacher can decide not only how to teach but also what to teach provided he or she is based on local, global, and students’ needs in order to achieve real efficiency in language use of topics, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (see 2.2 below) — in addition, there is a *virtual* laboratory outside the classroom: many learners of English

contact speakers from around the world via the internet, which both facilitates the access to written and oral interactions and provides exercises and audio files, even on English worldwide varieties (Walker, 2010). Moreover, it is in this context that the role of the non-native teachers is also reassessed: as competent users of ELF, these teachers are both a good model and “an excellent example of precisely the sort of internationally intelligible accent that their learners aspire to” (id., p. 68)’.

THE HISTORICAL DIMENSION OF ENGLISH TEACHING AND ELF AS THE ACTUALIZATION OF A REAL COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

In order to fully understand the changes in English pronunciation teaching that resulted in its culmination as the ELF approach to pronunciation teaching, it is important to analyze the historical development both of the instruction by the teacher and of the production by the students. As stated by Richards and Rodgers (2004), the changes in language teaching methods throughout the past one hundred years or so would reflect some concerns with specific learner needs — such as focus on communicative proficiency or on reading comprehension—, and with the trends of teaching approaches and methods. As a result of such changes and concerns, pronunciation, once considered the “Cinderella”¹⁷ of L2 studies (Kelly *apud* Celce-Murcia *et alli*, 2010), has presented the most variable perspectives to its teaching and acquisition because the view of its importance has altered considerably.

The most common approach to the history of language instruction is the presentation of its chronological development, which covers from antiquity to the present day (Stern, 1983), and portrays a movement from ‘activism’ — focus on speaking and language use — to ‘formalism’ — focus on language analysis — and vice-versa. Consequently, some methods and approaches emphasized pronunciation teaching, whereas others deemphasized it, and, at the same time,

¹⁵ In this sense, it is important to bear in mind that, linguistically-wise, no variety is either better or worse than the others. Consequently, these varieties should be as much valued and respected as any standard variety from the Inner Circle countries, as standardization “is a characteristic of the social treatment of a variety, not a property of the language variant itself” (Ryan, Giles and Sebastian, 1982, p. 3).

¹⁶ In this sense, there is, finally, the consolidation of what many authors seem to advocate without really being able to promote in their pronunciation-teaching manuals: the establishment of an accent as a model for guidance, and not a norm to be imitated or followed blindly — or mutely —, which ultimately promotes respect, attainability, and learnability (Avery and Ehrlich, 1992; Celce-Murcia *et alli*, 2010; Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994; Kelly, 2000).

¹⁷ This label conveys the message that among all the ‘daughters’ of ‘mother grammar’ — or rather, ‘stepmother’ in this case —, pronunciation is the most neglected one, even mistreated.

some methods required native-like pronunciation from learners, whilst others did not require any pronunciation production at all.

A TIMELINE APPROACH OF ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION TEACHING

The linear approach to the historical dimension of language teaching presents a movement from one kind of emphasis to another regarding the concerns with teaching and learning, which seems to happen every twenty-five years or so (Brown, 2007). Celce-Murcia (2001) characterizes such movement as a pendulum swinging to and fro. Regarding pronunciation teaching and the requirement of its production, however, there are three distinct situations to be considered and analyzed in this timeline dimension. Basically, the methods and approaches of the first tendency were followed by those of the second one and vice-versa, in an apparent pendulum movement, until the third tendency started to manifest in some of the teaching trends. The apex was reached during the Communicative Approach, for which pronunciation assumed a new role.

In the first situational group of language teaching, we may place three approaches which neither emphasized teaching pronunciation features specifically, nor required from the student a specific target pronunciation. The first one, *Grammar Translation Method*, lasted from the 1840s to the 1940s¹⁸, and attributed unimportance to pronunciation since only vocabulary and grammar rules were necessary for the learner to read literary works (Richards and Rodgers, 2004). The *Reading-Based Approach*, around the 1940s, was the second one to re-present this view of “reading as the most usable skill to have in a foreign language since not many people traveled abroad at that time” (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p. 6). The last one was the *Cognitive-Code Approach*, in the 1960s, which de-emphasized pronunciation teaching because

perfection was viewed as an unrealistic, unattainable goal (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

The second situation of English pronunciation teaching comprises four methods and approaches in which pronunciation was taught and its production required, especially a native-like one, by deploying an “Analytic-Linguistic Approach” to pronunciation teaching which “utilizes information and tools such as a phonetic alphabet, articulatory descriptions, charts of the vocal apparatus, contrastive information, and other aids to supplement listening, imitation, and production” (Celce-Murcia et alli, 2010, p. 2). The first one is the *Direct Method*, born as a reaction to the Grammar Translation Method from the Reform Movement of mid-19th century; according to Stern (1992), from 1880 towards World War I, Phonetics¹⁹, the Applied Linguistics of those years, influenced language teaching greatly by shaping its characteristics and by stating, via the IPA articles, that speaking and pronunciation should be taught first in a language class, with emphasis on everyday-life language and on students’ familiarization with the sounds of the foreign language (Stern, 1983). The second methods, also claimed to be deeply enrooted in the Reform Movement (Howatt and Widdowson, 2004), are the *Audiolingual Method* in the US and its British sibling, the *Oral-Situational Approach*: both emphasize perfection from the start, with special attention being given to minimal-pair drills that worked with segmental aspects (Celce-Murcia et alli, 2010) and to the use of a phonetic alphabet. The third approach is the *Silent Way*, which, like the first one(s), sets a general goal on “near-native fluency in the target language, and correct pronunciation and mastery of the prosodic elements” (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p. 83) since the initial stage of learning — the only difference being the materials deployed, which consisted of a sound-color chart and Cuisenaire rods, but not a phonetic alphabet. The last one was the *Community Language Learning*, which has a syllabus basically initiated and designed by the students, who define

¹⁸ It is important not to forget that, although the Communicative Approaches to language teaching are in vogue nowadays, there still are schools and teachers who apply the Grammar Translation Method, even if there are not any supports to its use regarding educational theory, psychology, or linguistics (see Richards and Rodgers, 2001; and de Lima, 2011).

¹⁹ According to Callou and Leite (2003), the real distinction between phonetics and phonology was not systematic until Ferdinand de Saussure and Baudoin de Courtenay made an attempt to promote it. However, nowadays both terms have different meanings than those they had in the late eighteenth century.

what they intend to focus on and receive the teachers assistance in order to produce utterances fluently and accurately; there is also a recorder to ensure that the intuitive and imitative teaching approach be efficient (Celce-Murcia *et alli*, 2010).

The third group of methods and approaches in the timeline dimension of English pronunciation teaching is related to the absence of formal instruction of specific aspects of pronunciation — or maybe the lack of its necessity —, but the presence of its requirement in production, especially a native-like one. In this group we find practically all the other methods that were not referred to above and which appeared after the 1970s, mainly comprising those with Affective-Humanistic approach, which emphasized a pronunciation teaching based on imitation and modeling, but not on the training of specific features. An example is *Suggestopedia*, or as Larsen-Freeman (2000) puts it, *Desuggestopedia*, since it represents “the application of the study of suggestion to pedagogy, [and] has been developed to help students eliminate the feeling that they cannot be successful or the negative association they may have toward studying” (op. cit., p. 73); although there is not any specific use of pronunciation materials except for vocabulary lists and previously studied dialogues read by the teacher in class (Richards and Rodgers, 2001), students are expected, when they are ready, to produce the target language as native-like as they can, which of course includes pronunciation. Another example is the *Total Physical Response* (TPR): students are expected to acquire the L2 by performing physical activities directed by the teacher as though they were on a stage (Brown, 2007); there is, then, little focus on pronunciation instruction, but there is the requirement of its production when the students have or wish to speak.

As stated above, there was an apex both reached and represented by the CLT for the treatment dispensed to pronunciation in the classroom. Even if communication for CLT should be considered in terms of fluency, pronunciation is still regarded in terms of native-likeness, as we can see when Celce-Murcia *et alli* (2010) assert that there are six categories of learners²⁰ who should present a “high

level of intelligibility” (op. cit., p. 8) — meaning, actually, a high level of approximation to the native-speaker accent.

ELF REASSESSMENT OF PRONUNCIATION TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A CLT PERSPECTIVE

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has already been detailed and explained extensively by Brown (2007), Brumfit (1984), Larsen-Freeman (2000), Richard-Amato (2010), and Richards and Rodgers (2001), to name a few. For the current scope of this paper, however, CLT can be summarized as an approach which focus on the learner’s development of communicative ability, i.e., “a set of strategies for getting messages sent and received and for negotiating meaning as an interactive participant in discourse, whether spoken or written” (Brown, 2007, p. 34). However, according to Jones (2002), maybe two of the most censured aspects of pronunciation instruction materials and books that claim to be communicative are “their widespread reliance on decontextualized language and lack of grounding in the realities of actual communication” (op. cit., p. 183).

The steps, procedures and types of activities suggested for the implementation of a CLT approach for pronunciation are summarized and adapted from Celce-Murcia *et alli* (2010), as follows:

Description and analysis: the ‘how’ and ‘when’ of the phonological feature is explained to the learners so that they ‘notice’ it – charts, diagrams, sensory techniques and written explanations;

Listening discrimination: focused listening is used in order to have students identify or distinguish the phonological feature – listening activities involving isolated words, sentences, and songs and movie scenes;

Controlled practice: exercises are provided in order to have students practice the phonological

need to use English on a daily basis: lecturers, refugees, technicians, etc. who live and/or work in English-speaking countries; businesspeople who use English as their lingua franca; foreign teachers of English who are expected to be the major source of input for their learners; and tour guides, waiters, hotel personnel, etc. who are expected to deal with English speakers in a non-English-speaking country (Celce-Murcia *et alli*, 2010).

²⁰ Such categories comprise, then, at least potentially, almost all types of learners, since they all those who

features with focus on accuracy – minimal-pair sentences, short dialogues, and repetitions and oral drills;

Guided practice: exercises that promote expression of meaning through semicontrolled and structured focused tasks are provided for the learner to be able to automatize the production of the phonological feature regarding both accuracy and fluency – information-gap exercises, cued dialogues, and sequencing tasks;

Communicative practice: authentic interactions that require the students to use the phonological feature are provided so that they both exchange information and pay attention both to the content and to the form of their message – role plays, problem solving activities, interviews, debates, storytelling, and values clarification.

The CLT should, then, allow some flexibility to the English class, so that teachers could choose the contents of their teaching regarding both learner's needs and the quality of their communication. Feedback, of course, should be constantly provided, as long as the specificities of each step regarding its necessity are respected (Celce-Murcia *et alli*, 2010). During the first two steps, feedback should be practically constant, since their aim is the correct placement of articulators, such as tongue and lips, and the students' right identification of the target features. During the practice stages, feedback should be provided regarding the nature of the practice: controlled practice requires constant feedback, since its aim is accuracy; guided and communicative practice, on the other hand, entails fluency and freer communication, which could be jeopardized by hasty correction, so feedback is usually given after students' production.

In view of these ideas of CLT for pronunciation, there is the need for reviewing some concepts related to pronunciation. Intelligibility, for ELF, should be seen as "the basic recognition of words and utterances in the speech flow [regarding the decoding of sounds], 'comprehensibility', the meaning of these words and utterances in their contexts, and 'interpretability', the understanding of the speaker's intention" (Walker, 2010, p. 17). Therefore, intelligibility starts being an interactional process that generates effort both from the speaker and from the listener towards convergence – "the process of **negotiation of meaning** in establishing

and maintaining intelligibility" (id., p. 18 – emphasis in original) –, better achieved by accommodation strategies (Jenkins, 2000).

Proficiency, in its turn, can also start to be regarded as "the ability to use language appropriately in different contexts and the ability to organize one's thoughts through language" (Harley *et alli*, 1990, p. 7). Consequently, for ELF pronunciation, proficiency assumes the role of "successful processing of the **acoustic signal**" (Walker, 2010, p. 19 – emphasis in original), which represents a considerable emphasis on segmental features, as its users "rely heavily on the correct recognition of words and utterances in the speech flow through a bottom-up process and often construct their understanding of the message on the basis of individual sounds that they may or may not have heard correctly" (id., p. 19).

Even though ELF users deploy a bottom-up process that focuses on the acoustic signal, this does not mean an emphasis on accuracy as it is usually defined, i.e., the maximum approximation to a native-speaker accent (Barreto and Alves, 2009). Instead, "[a]ccuracy should describe the relationship between what is intended and what is achieved in communication" (Willis, 1996, p. 45): students would no longer need to conform to the norm imposed either by the native speaker or by the teacher as the only way to achieve appropriacy; accent could be preserved once the linguistic influence promoted by the learner's L1 started being seen as something useful (Walker, 2010).

If accuracy presents little difficulty to be defined, fluency, on the other hand, causes some nuisance. There are three similar definitions for fluency: (1) it can be defined as the capacity developed from practice that helps the learner to articulate the L2 sounds with ease (Barreto and Alves, 2009); (2) it can also be defined "as the ability of the speaker to produce indefinitely many sentences conforming to the phonological, syntactical and semantic exigencies of a given natural language on the basis of a finite exposure to a finite corpus of that language" (Leeson, 1975, p. 136); and (3) it is related to "the smooth joining-up of elements at an acceptable speed of delivery (...) with a minimum of effort, and with a minimum of conscious decision taking" (Tench, 1981, pp. 61-2). However, for ELF, fluency should be reassessed and "regarded as the natural language use, whether or not it results in native-speaker-like

language comprehension of production" (Brumfit, 1984, p. 56); otherwise, the teacher could risk having students who, according to Willis (1996), instead of being fluent, would just conform to the teacher's expectations²¹. Nevertheless, such re-evaluation cannot be thoroughly understood until what constitutes ELF pronunciation — the Lingua Franca Core (Jenkins, 2000) — is known, as it is done in the next section.

THE LINGUA FRANCA CORE (LFC)

The LFC was proposed by Jenkins (2000 and 2007) after spending some years studying and analyzing the interactions between non-native speakers of English in the UK. Her intention "was to determine to what extent breakdowns in communication in ELF settings were due to problems at a phonological level, and to what extent they were due to problems in vocabulary, grammar, general knowledge, and so on" (Walker, 2010, p. 26). Therefore, she established a Lingua Franca Core, that is, phonological elements that should receive attention in a pronunciation lessons since production failure in these areas could jeopardize both intelligibility and the success of communication in an ELF setting²².

For ELF there is a simplification of pronunciation items "by removing from them a range of items that did not contribute to (...) intelligibility" (Jenkins, 2007, p. 27). — a lighter workload (Walker, 2010) — to be worked with in class *vis-à-vis* GA or RP. However, such simplification should not be considered as a selection of easy items; on the contrary, easiness depends on L1 influence: some features present in the L1 would not need to be worked upon — "mother tongue [regarded] as friend" (id., p. 66) —, whereas those absent would.

Therefore, regarding consonants, the only ones that are not preserved are /θ/ and /ð/, which "are

notably absent from many languages in the world, including some native-speaker varieties of English, such as Irish, Jamaican, or New York" (Walker, 2010, p. 29); they can be replaced by other sounds, like [t] and [d] in *think* and *this*, respectively. All the others, even allophonic aspiration of the voiceless plosives /p t k/ — especially in word initial position —, are maintained. There may be, however, some concessions directly related to the speaker's L1 accent. The first concession to be mentioned is the <r>, which is advised to be rhotic, i.e., sounded, like in the American pronunciation for *car*. The second one is related to intervocalic <t>, which should **not** be pronounced as a flap [ɾ], like in the American pronunciation of *better*. The last one is related to dark /l/, that is, the post-vocalic [ɫ], which could be pronounced as [ʊ] in *milk*.

For consonant clusters, there are two distinct considerations. Regarding initial and medial clusters, like in *spring* and *cluster*, there may be the "insertion of a short [ɪ]- or [e]-like vowel between two of the consonants" (Walker, 2010, p. 33), since the deletion of one of the consonants in such cases could jeopardize intelligibility. On the other hand, for medial and final clusters, like in *consonants*, depending on the case, a consonant — especially a central /t/ or /d/ of three consonants — can be deleted: an strategy deployed even by native speakers, who "commonly pronounce words like 'postman', 'aspects', or 'next week' as [ˈpəʊsmən], [ˈæspeks], and [neksˈwi:k]" (id., p. 33).

Regarding vowels, it is possible to say that "[t] here is far more variation in the vowels of English than in the consonants" (Walker, 2010, p. 34). This means that even among native-speaker accents, vowels vary greatly (Crystal, 2003b; Jenkins, 2000; Kirkpatrick, 2007). Therefore, there are only three requirements to be fulfilled: that the vowel system (1) be consistent in accordance with L1 accent; (2) respect the difference in quantity between long and short vowels, even in relation to its environment, like in the minimal pairs *fit-feet* and *feet-feed*; and (3) preserve the vowel /ɜ/, since there may be "an L2 listener's need for certain marked sounds to be pronounced correctly" (Jenkins, 2000, p. 145), especially because this is an infrequent sound in English — only 0.52% of the vowel occurrences in a speech sample (Crystal, 2003b) — and has proved to cause communication breakdowns (Jenkins,

²¹ Willis (1996) explains that what seems to be fluency could, in fact, be one of these: (1) language which was already familiar to the students, (2) language which was already about to become extemporaneous, i.e., not new at all, or (3) learner's compliance to the teacher's expectation in terms of native-like production.

²² For the minutiae of explanations regarding the LFC, Jenkins (2000 and 2007) and Walker (2010) should be consulted.

2000). Besides, the teaching of reduced vowels in unstressed syllables or weak forms do not need to be emphasized in class: “[i]t is possible to stress a syllable without weakening surrounding syllables; all languages, and not just the so-called stress-timed languages, distinguish between stressed and unstressed syllables” (Walker, 2010, p. 42).

There are, for the LFC, at last, only two aspects of suprasegmental features that play an important role in intelligibility. The division of the utterance in speech units has the aim to, on the one hand, promote an enhanced planning time for the speaker and, on the other hand, to facilitate the decoding process for the listener (Walker, 2010). Nuclear stress, in its turn, highlights the prominent syllable, thus being “particularly crucial in terms of the receptive-productive mismatch” (Jenkins, 2000, p. 155), that is, once misplaced or mispronounced, nuclear stress can cause confusion due to the meaning it attributes to the message being conveyed. As for the other connected speech features, they are considered unnecessary because they are related to a rapid talking speed, which could eventually endanger the quality of communication between ELF speakers (Walker, 2010).

Another important consideration for ELF is that, regarding L1 accent variation, the learner has the opportunity to keep their linguistic identity without the need to conform to native-speakers’ production: there is an accent addition (Walker, 2010) — the speaker cannot have his speech production gauged against that of a native speaker (Jenkins, 2007). However, there are some concerns regarding ELF pronunciation teaching, as can be seen below.

CONCERNS REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LFC

The concerns related to the implementation of the LFC in pronunciation teaching can possibly be divided in three groups. The first one could be that LFC represents an inexistent accent, thus being wrong to impose it on learners. However, in the United Kingdom, for example, RP “is still the standard accent of the Royal Family, Parliament, the Church of England, the High Courts, and other national institutions; but *less than 3 per cent of the British people speak it in a pure form now*” (Crystal, 2003b, p. 365 – emphasis added), which does not represent a standard in the sense of a wide

use. Therefore, the LFC should function as “a set of phonological items that are central to intelligibility in ELF” (Walker, 2010, p. 54), but with the perk of allowing its users to have their L1 accent instead of a native speaker’s: this is “an element of increased choice” (id., p. 55) that allows learners to select an option “in full possession of the socio-linguistic facts” (Jenkins *apud* Walker, 2010, p. 55).

Second, there is the concern that mutual intelligibility could not be achieved by these allowed variations of ELF. However, it should not be forgotten that even among English native speakers there is not a single, common standard accent (Walker, 2010; Edwards, 1982). What is more, all of the items essential for intelligibility among ELF speakers are preserved, which, in turn, yield a legitimate version that can function as a starting point to be further developed if learners want to achieve a native-like accent (Jenkins, 2000; Walker, 2010).

Finally, there is the concern of a bad accent causing a bad impression. Usually, a bad accent is related to unintelligibility, which actually is a pronunciation problem. However, “accent and intelligibility are not the same thing. A speaker can have a very strong accent, yet be perfectly understood” (Derwing and Munro *apud* Walker, 2010, p. 18). Besides, there should also be a reassessment of native-speakerism: the native speaker does not speak the idealized standard variety of their language better than the non-native speaker, since both are influenced by several factors, such as geography and social status (Holliday, 2005).

WHAT FUTURE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH INDIRECTLY SAY ABOUT PRONUNCIATION TEACHING AND ELF AND THE LFC

In order to understand how urgent an ELF pronunciation approach is for the local context of Novo Hamburgo, data from a survey with thirty-six forthcoming teachers who study Modern Languages–Portuguese/English at Universidade Feevale were collected. These students were in different semesters of the course, thus portraying a comprehensive perspective regarding their opinions in relation to their own pronunciation quality, aim of accent acquisition, and pronunciation teaching priorities, for example. The questionnaire was applied in Portuguese, and the multiple-choice

questions were as neuter as possible lest they induce the interviewees' opinion, which, after all, cannot be guaranteed, unfortunately. The data provided by the interviewees is analyzed quantitatively as follows.

Regarding the first question, how the forthcoming teachers assess their own pronunciation in a ranking that ranges from 'not knowing' to 'awful' to 'native-like', no one considers it native-like; just one considers it excellent; four, very good; twelve, good; thirteen, fair; five, bad; no one, awful; and one does not know how to assess it. In a sense, most of the interviewees, 50%, think their pronunciation is of fair quality or below, portraying a slightly low self-esteem regarding the quality of their pronunciation. In an ELF context, however, those future teachers, as good communicators in English, would probably serve as a good model of pronunciation for international interactions.

The second question, related to the accent the interviewees have or try to have, included among the alternative answers eight native accents, like Canadian and Australian, a 'Brazilian' accent and two other options: none and another to be specified. Twenty-eight of the interviewees intend to have an American accent; two, a British accent; four, a Brazilian accent (an intelligible one); and two of them are not interested in having any particular accent. This data depicts a tendency to American phonocentrism (Pennycook *apud* Holliday, 2005), since 78% of the forthcoming teachers intend to have this accent. But, as only 47% of them consider their pronunciation good or very good, this is a perspective that could probably have been different if ELF was their aim instead of a native accent.

The third, fifth and thirteenth questions can be analyzed conjointly, since the answers proposed for them were the same — American, British, several, none, or another accent. Question number three asked about the accent the interviewees would normally be exposed to; number five was related to the accent they were taught; and number thirteen was about the accent they do, will, or would teach their students. Most of them try to be exposed to many accents in spite of being taught mainly the American one. Also, a lot of them seem to be aware of the need to help students understand more than one variety. This is significant in the sense that there seems to be an embryonic change happening

in relation to accent-exposure priorities that have started among future teachers.

The fourth question approaches the intentions of the interviewees regarding the quality of their pronunciation, i. e., whether they want it to be native-like or not. Although 78% of them want to have an American accent, only 25% intend to have their pronunciation similar to a native speaker's. In contrast, 72% of the interviewees intend to be intelligible, which shows that there is some confusion regarding pronunciation accentedness and intelligibility. On the other hand, such figures could reveal that there has been a change in perspective: although they want to sound like a native speaker of American English, they do not necessarily want to conform — there seems to be an intention to preserve the L1 accent, typical of an ELF context.

The answers to the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth questions are related to the teaching of pronunciation to which the forthcoming teachers have been exposed to. Regarding frequency of pronunciation lessons — ranging in five frequencies from always to never —, 53% of the interviewees said that pronunciation work was/is often done in class, and 17% said it does/did happen sometimes, while 14% consider it to be rarely done; another 14% believe it to always happen, and for 2% of the interviewees pronunciation work never happens in class. In relation to contextualization of these lessons, 94% think that such pronunciation work was/is contextualized, 3% considered them to be decontextualized, and 3% did not have an opinion about it. Concerning lesson planning, 69% think it was/is planned, whereas 14% think it was not planned and 17% could not tell. Regarding the reasons why such work was/is done —whether they were/are integrated, remedial, practice, or another —, 53% consider that such work was/is part of the regular work, 39% regard it as just an activity to work with a specific aspect of pronunciation, 3% think it to be remedial work on problematic pronunciation, whereas 5% consider it to be for another non specified reason. It is not possible to evaluate the validity of such data, but their slight discrepancies point to the fact that forthcoming teachers of English should be given a different treatment concerning pronunciation and pronunciation teaching, especially in methodology classes.

Questions number ten, eleven and twelve are related to the relevance of pronunciation lessons, of the correction and/or feedback by the teacher, and of the reasons why they are/would be important, respectively. Regarding question ten, 86% of the interviewees regard pronunciation lessons as very important, whereas the other 14% consider it important, but not necessary. In relation to feedback and correction, in its turn, 92% consider them very important because that was a way to help them improve communication quality; however, 5% considered them to be unimportant or dispensable, while the remaining 3% consider them important, but not necessary. As for the importance of pronunciation lessons, 78% consider them important for the development both of listening and of speaking skills, while 14% judge them important only for speaking, and 8%, only for listening. These data show the interest and acknowledgement by future teachers of English regarding the pronunciation teaching and its role in the development or communication quality, i.e., intelligibility, revealing, once more, a need for the implementation of a pronunciation teaching in the molds of a CLT.

The last question of the interview is related to the elements of pronunciation lessons that are considered important by the interviewees. Features of both the LFC and of general concern in English pronunciation teaching and learning were listed with examples in the interview, plus the element of grapheme-phoneme relationship. Interviewees could have chosen as many elements as they wanted, and their votes for priorities can be presented as follows: based on the graph, it is possible to say that, given the thirty-six interviewees, none of the features is unanimous among them; besides, a non-LFC element is the most voted, namely, the pronunciation of <th>, followed by another non-LFC item, rhythm. This makes it clear that there still is a tendency of appraising the native-speaker accent.

Out of the LFC, on the other hand, only the item related to vowel contrasts was significantly voted. This probably combines with the last item in the list, the phoneme-grapheme relationship, which poses some difficulties for Brazilians, whose grapho-phonetic-phonological system is more transparent than the English one (Alves and Barreto, 2009).

Although 42% (question 3) of the interviewees want to expose their students to several accents of English, only fourteen people stated this as an important element in a pronunciation lesson. The other elements that can be considered prominent in this survey, of course, are related to a mixture of the native-speaker norm and the LFC, namely, regularities in pronunciation — such as the –s and –ed endings —, connected speech elements, consonant clusters, contrastive stress, aspiration and syllable stress, intervocalic <t> and syllabic consonants, reduced forms, and post-vocalic /l/ and /m/²³.

Accordingly, the data above shows a tendency for the learners to promote the maintenance of EFL standards of pronunciation: the native speaker — especially of the American variety — establishes the norm, which has both prestige and identification, constituting pattern A in Ryan, Giles and Sebastian's (1982) patterns of language preference²⁴: the dominant group's language variety (LV1) is regarded as both having social power — i.e., being superior — and attracting people's preference. On the other hand, however, there also seems to be an awareness of the new dimension of the role English has been playing in international communication due to the fact that there is a change in the interviewees' perspective regarding such accents: "[p]attern B occurs when members of the low-status group begin to be aware of alternatives" (op. cit., p. 10), which can be seen in the interest by 56% of the interviewees in being exposed to different accents (question 3), even if only 42% intend to have their students exposed to different English accents (question 13). Eventually, there may be a shift into patterns C and, later, D: the respondents — and other non-native English speakers — may assume their identities as ELF speakers, not being worried about conforming to any kind of phonocentrism.

Furthermore, the fact that only 25% of the interviewees want to have a native-like pronunciation (question 4) portrays a dichotomy natural to a period

²³ The post-vocalic /m/ was included in the survey because many Brazilians produce it as a /n/, or rather, as Monaretto, Quednau and da Hora (2005) put it, as a /N/, an archiphoneme actualized in accordance with the following phoneme, being assimilated by it.

²⁴ See note 5 for a summary of the authors' considerations.

when changes are about to happen: they want to have an American accent, but they prefer being intelligible to having a native-like accent. This means that they feel they have the right to use the language, but there is an absence of discernment regarding what is to be alien to the English-speaking context. If the alternative presented is controlled by the speaker of the Inner Circle, then accent is regarded as failure. However, if an informed decision could be made, then alienness would cease existing: the right to use ELF as a democratized language could suffice to solve the dichotomy accent versus identity versus communality. Then a change in the view of 'failure to conform' that disturbs even the most competent non-native speaker and in the possible absence of self-esteem that some interviewees conveyed through their answers to question number one — half of them regard their accent as fair or bad — could be generated by an ELF approach to pronunciation teaching which values variety and promotes attainability.

Finally, an ELF approach could be tailored to meet the reality and immediate needs of the learners. Therefore, if learners consider that there is a need for work on some non-LFC items, such work could be done in a communicative fashion so much as the work on LFC items, provided the LFC items be worked on adequately, i.e., by promoting the learner's ability to accommodate and negotiate meaning through the exposition to different varieties. Besides, as the vowel distinctions and the grapho-phonetic-phonological system present natural difficulty for Brazilians to learn (Alves and Barreto, 2009), this could be minimized by an approach that involves an emphasis on the regularities rather than on the difficulties, such as the one proposed by Dutra (2010), who shows via tables how the regular patterns of the English vocalic grapheme-phoneme relationships may be available for the learner, who, then, may use it as the basis for the development of an intelligible accent.

FINAL REMARKS

Kachru's sociolinguistic profile of English, delineated in 1985 (Crystal, 2003a; Jenkins, 2000 and 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2007; McKay, 2002; Walker, 2010), generated a wave of changes that he probably did not devise. First, by establishing the Circles and the roles English played in them, he changed

the way other people considered the role of Inner Circle countries in determining the standards for the language. Second, by showing the potential role of English in the Outer and Expanding Circles, he, even if indirectly, promoted a reassessment of English around the world regarding international communication. Finally, based upon the previous two changes, he influenced the work of several professionals, who gradually started changing their perspective in the process of teaching and learning English.

The understanding of Kachru's Circles leads to a reassessment of the contexts of English teaching and learning. ESL and EFL end up being viewed as contexts that promote native-speakerism, that is, all the learners in these contexts have to conform to a native standard variety. However, the ELF context promotes a renewed possibility: Jenkins (2000) proposed an alternative for the prevailing phonocentrism in English pronunciation teaching and learning: the LFC. This, in turn, promotes accent addition: the ultimate respect for the linguistic identity of the English speaker, who cannot be regarded as non-native as the language is democratized.

The LFC, then, should be seen as a tool for teachers who want to conjugate a teachable-learnable workload with the respect for their learners' L1 accent. In this sense, there could be a decrease of phonocentrism by still promoting intelligibility via accent addition. What is more, an authentic CLT could be deployed by the teacher in order to help his or her students to achieve a goal that is realistic by using activities and techniques that meet their real need concerning intelligibility improvement (McKay, 2002; Walker, 2010). Then, proficiency, accuracy, and fluency can stop being seen as conformity to the native speaker standard and can start being seen as success in communication (Willis, 1996).

The analysis of the interviews presented above, even being brief, promotes the understanding that there is a need for information regarding new possibilities for English pronunciation teaching via the application of an ELF approach. Besides, it is also clear that there is a strong inclination for the maintenance of an American accent, a phonocentrism sustained by several hegemonic mechanisms (Crystal, 2003a). However, based on

the inclination of the interviewees to choose the implementation of several English accents as one of the six most important elements in a pronunciation lesson — out of 16 items —, it is possible to say that there is a concern related to the globalization of the language and its effects for international communication.

Finally, since for Brazilians there is a reliance on grapho-phonetic-phonological transfer (Alves and Barreto, 2009), and since one of the most difficult aspects pointed by the interviewees is the vowel contrasts, the implementation of a LFC approach to

pronunciation teaching could be done by applying proposals such as the one by Dutra (2010), who presents a grapho-phonemic system for English as a tool to help students acquire the vowel system. Besides, both native and non-native accents should be presented to students so that they could be informed and, then, not only choose their accent, but also understand variation as part of the real ELF world. Such choice, therefore, could be researched in order to study the Brazilian accents that might emerge in this ELF approach/context.

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